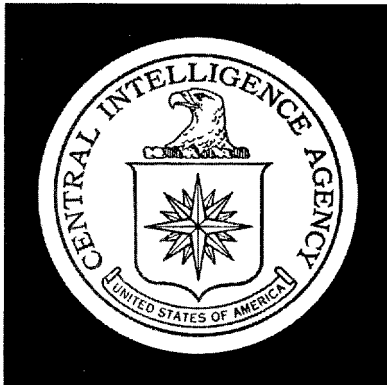


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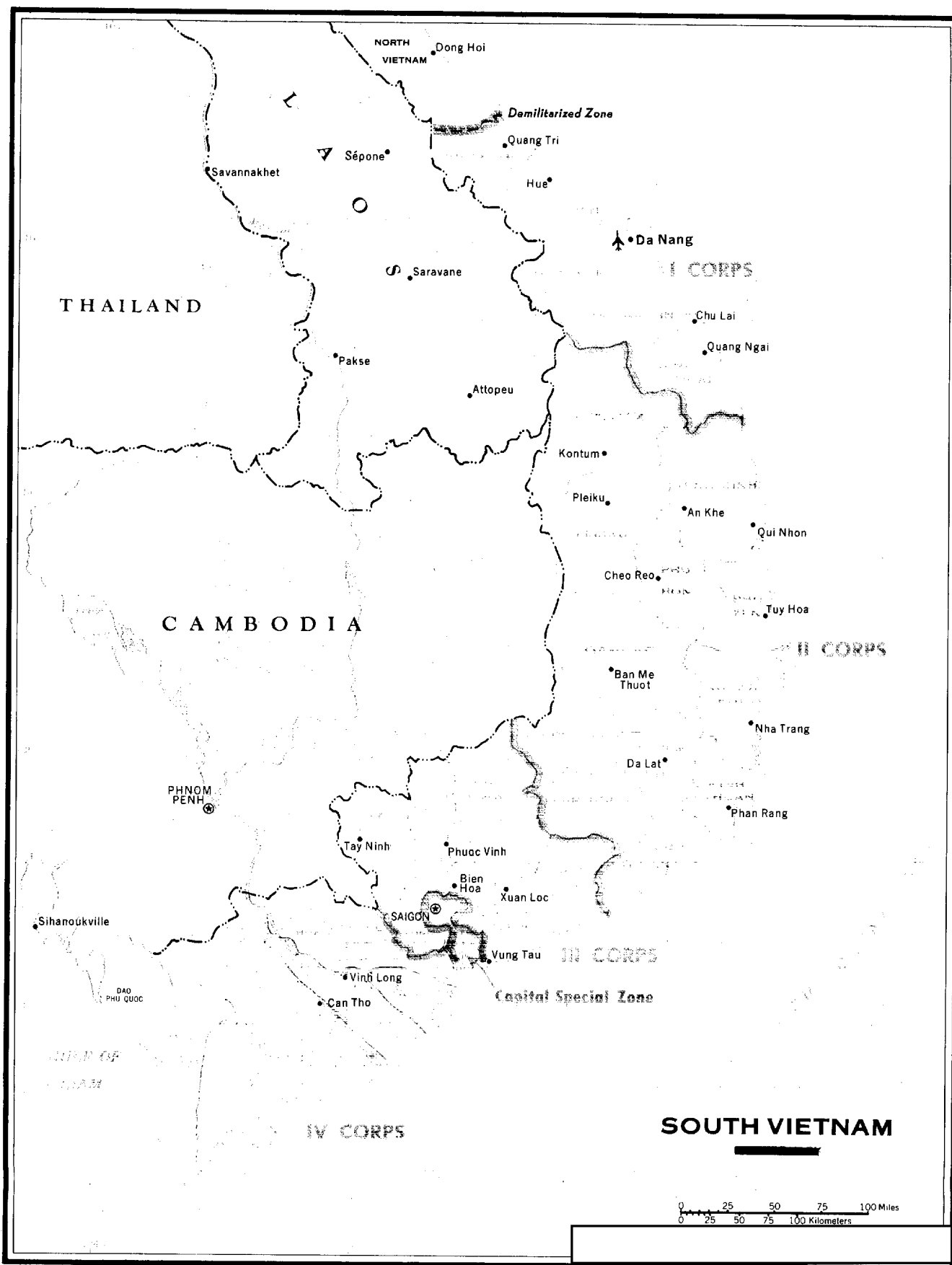
Vietnam: Current situation report. (Page 1)

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

South Vietnamese Political Affairs: [Political associates of Premier Ky and Chief of State Thieu are making major bids to win civilian support for the presidential aspirations of both leaders]

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[Tran Quoc Buu, chief of South Vietnam's largest labor group, reportedly intends to campaign for Premier Ky among the members of his union. Another Ky booster, prominent politician Dang Van Sung, is said to be working for the cooperation of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao political-religious groups.]

[Supporters of Chief of State Thieu, on the other hand, are reportedly developing a civilian front to endorse the military candidate for President. They assume this will be Thieu. The activity suggests that Ky and Thieu are taking seriously their unannounced candidacies and that they are taking appropriate measures to gauge their chances for success.]

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: The enemy mortar attack on the US airbase at Da Nang on 27 February killed 11 Americans and seriously wounded 27 others, according to revised casualty reports. Eighteen US aircraft were damaged and five communications vans were destroyed.

From positions about four miles south of the base, the Communists for the first time fired Soviet-designed 140-mm. barrage rockets--a weapon not previously known to have been in the North Vietnamese or Viet Cong inventory. Some of the 51 rockets fired hit a village near the base, killing 32 South Vietnamese civilians and damaging about 200 homes. (Map)

(continued)

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North Vietnamese Political Developments: A four-man delegation, led by the chief of the DRV mission to the International Control Commission, arrived in Rangoon on 25 February, according to western press reports. The event is considered potentially important because UN Secretary General Thant is in the Burmese capital.

The North Vietnamese may make contact with U Thant despite their avowed rejection of any UN role in a Vietnam settlement. The DRV delegates could use such a meeting to reiterate to U Thant alleged US violations of the Geneva Accords and to impress upon him Hanoi's contention that a settlement of the war must be along the lines of the DRV's interpretation of those accords.

Changes in North Vietnamese Government: Among several organizational changes in the DRV government recently announced by Hanoi, the most significant was the upgrading of the Ministry of Heavy Industry by the appointment of politburo member Le Thanh Nghi as its head. Until this time politburo members headed only the ministries of defense, public security and foreign affairs.

In view of North Vietnam's small industrial base, it is not yet clear why the Ministry of Heavy Industry should receive such influential leadership at this time. It is possible that Hanoi is undertaking a review of its long-range plans for industrialization because of the damage done by US bombing. Le Thanh Nghi's appointment may also be connected with the major reconstruction and repair efforts brought on by the bombing.

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Indonesia: [General Suharto is pressing Congress to modify its action plan against Sukarno.]

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[Suharto's rationale is his need to maintain support within the armed forces and to avoid further resentment and violence in pro-Sukarno areas. Suharto apparently believes that the turnover of power of 20 February was as far as the regime could go and still maintain unanimity among the four armed services.]

[Meanwhile, anti-Sukarno political activists will continue to demand Sukarno's suspension as president and a public trial. They already are maintaining that Congress cannot limit itself merely to confirming the 20 February transfer of power. Since General Suharto has called on the nation to accept all decisions made by Congress, he may be preparing the way for a compromise between pro- and anti-Sukarno elements, which might lead to suspension of Sukarno as president but no trial.]

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NATO-UK: [Most of the representatives to the North Atlantic Council have sharply criticized Prime Minister Wilson's agreement to develop a "treaty of friendship and cooperation" with the USSR.]

[At an informal meeting, Secretary General Brosio argued that such a treaty would lead to a division of the alliance between those members who had declared their friendship for the USSR and those who had not. The representatives of Italy, Canada, and Denmark supported Brosio, noting that a UK-Soviet treaty would generate "uncomfortable" popular pressure in their countries to follow suit.]

[The German and Dutch representatives criticized London's failure to consult with its NATO partners and stressed the need for a common political line toward the USSR. The German delegate claimed that the broad title of such a pact would be interpreted as a "radical" change in British foreign policy.]

[The French representative termed the UK action not really compatible with "alliance obligations," noting that Paris had turned down a similar Soviet bid.]

[While pique over lack of consultation is probably involved, the vigorous criticism of Britain appears to reflect genuine concern over the potentially divisive effect which Soviet bilateral overtures of this nature could have on the NATO countries.]

[British officials say they will begin a study of what should go into the proposed treaty, but emphasize that Wilson made it clear to Kosygin that nothing in the treaty would imply a change in Britain's attitude toward its NATO commitments.]

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Nigeria: Eastern military governor Ojukwu appears to be laying the groundwork for a unilateral assumption of still greater regional independence after the end of the fiscal year on 31 March.

On 21 February the Eastern government issued a decree giving the governor authority to impose martial law in any part of the region. The decree appears aimed at forestalling subversive activity by troublesome minority tribes in the East. Recent reports indicate that the East's army--officially one battalion--has been reorganized as a brigade, and that extensive recruiting has been undertaken.

Ojukwu, in a radio address on 25 February, warned the other regional military leaders that unless the agreements made in Ghana last month were fully implemented by 31 March he would consider himself free to take any measures necessary to protect Eastern interests.

[Ojukwu told US and UK representatives in Enugu that the next two weeks would be crucial. He has asked to see them again early this week, and the US ambassador and the UK high commissioner as well. Ojukwu's secretary added that the financial situation is critical because the East needs substantially more revenue to take care of the approximately one million refugees from other parts of Nigeria.]

The Lagos press has strongly attacked Ojukwu's decree. His threat to make further moves toward independence should encourage those hardliners in the other regions who are pressuring Gowon to take military measures to halt the Eastern Region's moves toward independence.

Chile: President Frei's second rebuff by the Senate in less than six weeks will further complicate the Chilean political situation.

Frei's proposed constitutional amendment permitting the president to dissolve Congress and call new elections failed to pass in the Senate on 23 February. In spite of strong pressure by the administration, the only support outside Frei's own Christian Democratic party came from the Nationalists and the Communists.

The effect of this vote on Frei's position is unclear. The government had insisted on an early vote, possibly with the intention of injecting national affairs into the forthcoming municipal elections, which normally hinge on local rather than national issues. Although the Senate's vote looks like a defeat for Frei, Ambassador Dungan comments that the government probably never contemplated making the concessions necessary to enact the reform proposal.

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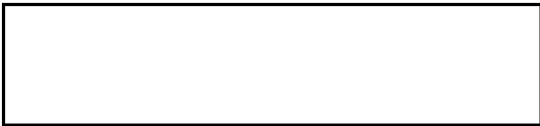
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